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W. Germany Fighting Off Spy Onslaught

16,000 Agents Work For Red Countries

By The Associated Press

BONN.

West Germany is fighting off the most massive Communist espionage attack ever launched against a single country.

Interior Minister Gerhard Schroeder said recently that an estimated 16,000 agents work for East bloc intelligence services in West Germany.

Despite many obstacles, Bonn government agents manage to uncover about 200 agents a month. Still, for every lost spy the Communists seem to have another ready to take his place.

High-ranking officials of Red intelligence services who defected to the West have reported that about 18,000 persons are full-time employees of Soviet, East German, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and Bulgarian spy organizations in East Germany, mostly stationed in or around East Berlin. It is the base of operations against West Germany.

The East German Communists alone spend \$125 million a year on espionage and subversive operations against West Germany, Mr. Schroeder said.

To combat this operation the Bonn government employs just over 3,000 counter-intelligence agents and office personnel. They operate on an annual budget of \$17.5 million.

2,000 Convicted

Officials are reluctant to release precise annual statistics, but in the last eight years courts convicted more than 2,000 persons on espionage charges and more than 18,000 admitted receiving assignments which were not carried out.

This is a staggering figure compared with the seventeen spy convictions in the United States during the last eleven years. But at least four of the Americans — the Rosenberg couple, Harry Gold and David Greenglass — may have been more dangerous than all of the Red agents in Germany put together. They betrayed atomic bomb secrets.

West Germany does not have American nuclear secrets, but there have been a few agents who have done considerable damage.

Most Dangerous

According to security officials the most dangerous was Alfred Frenzel, sixty-one, Socialist member of the Defense Committee of the Bundestag (lower house of Parliament) from 1953 until his arrest last fall.

Frenzel, sentenced to fifteen years at hard labor earlier this year, supplied the Czechoslovakian intelligence service with West Germany's defense plans for 1961 and betrayed the out-

lines on the Atlantic alliance's defense requirements until 1963. The latter information included projected troop strength, equipment, ammunition and fuel requirements for the fifteen NATO countries.

Another dangerous traitor — and most embarrassing to the government — was Otto John, head of the government's counter-intelligence service.

Revealed Top Secrets

After four years as top counter-spy, during which he once dined cozily with Director Allen Dulles of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, John defected to East Germany in 1954. He gave the Communists important West German and Allied counter-intelligence secrets, including names of agents operating behind the Iron Curtain.

John remained in East Germany for seventeen months and then redefected to the West. After a long trial, during which he claimed he was drugged, kidnaped and held against his will in East Germany, John was sentenced to four years at hard labor. He served barely half of his sentence.

Easy Recruitment

Red spy recruiters have a relatively easy job finding prospects in this divided nation. One-fifth of West Germany's population are expellees and refugees from German-speaking areas now dominated by communism. Perhaps every third West German has relatives in Communist East Germany.

Western security chiefs say about 80 per cent of the 16,000 agents operating in West Germany are working for the East German Ministry for State Security (MFS) and the East German Army's military intelligence branch. The other 20 per cent work directly for the Soviet Union and the other Red countries.

Security officials assert that only one per cent of 1,000 agents is spying for the Communists for idealistic reasons. The greatest number are "in the business" for material gain or adventure.

But only a few agents make more than \$100 a month.

Counter-intelligence officials said their biggest obstacle is the courts, which they believe tend to be too lenient with spies.

Interior Minister Schroeder said German courts should follow the examples of their United States and British counterparts, which hand out sentences more than twice as long as German courts.

"The Communist intelligence organizations can recruit a person and say: Don't worry if you get caught . . . you'll only go to jail for a couple of years and when you're free we will take good care of you," one Allied intelligence official commented.

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